NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
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CHARLES WEISS/TEHERAN

TROUBLE IN TEHERAN

ANNCR:

WHAT HAPPENED IN TEHERAN LAST FRIDAY WHEN TROOPS FIRED INTO A CROWD OF DEMONSTRATORS WHO HAD VIOLATED THE STATE OF MARTIAL LAW DECLARED ONLY THAT MORNING WAS A VIOLENT CLIMAX TO A SITUATION WHICH HAS BEEN BUILDING UP FOR SOME TIME. VOA'S CHARLES WEISS HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM TEHERAN.

VOICE:

THE AUTHORITIES STAND BY THE FIGURE OF NINETY-SEVEN PERSONS KILLED IN THE CLASH BETWEEN TROOPS AND DEMONSTRATORS IN SOUTH TEHERAN FRIDAY. BUT WESTERN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES TEND TO THINK THE FIGURE IS OVER TWO HUNDRED WHILE RUMORS OF AS MANY AS A THOUSAND DEAD ARE MAKING THE ROUNDS. IN ANY CASE, WHAT HAS HAPPENED IS THAT THE SHAH AND THE ARMY HAVE SHOWN THEY ARE DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER. AND THE QUESTION EVERYONE IS ASKING IS WHETHER THE OPPOSITION IS PREPARED, OR IF IT'S ABLE, TO TEST THAT DETERMINATION AGAIN.

ONE KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVER DESCRIBED FRIDAY'S INCIDENT AS A MISJUDGMENT ON THE PART OF THE RADICAL ISLAMIC OPPOSITION. IT'S HIS VIEW THAT WHEN DEMONSTRATIONS PASSED WITHOUT INCIDENT EARLIER IN THE WEEK, INCLUDING THE MARCH OF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE IN TEHERAN ON THURSDAY IN OPEN DEFIANCE OF A SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT BAN, THE RADICAL RELIGIOUS LEADERS -- THE MULLAHS -- THOUGHT THEY HAD THE SHAH'S REGIME ON THE RUN. ON THE ADVICE OF THE ARMY, HE WENT ON, THE GOVERNMENT PROMULGATED MARTIAL LAW REGULATIONS IN TEHERAN AND ELEVEN OTHER TOWNS ON THURSDAY NIGHT. ON FRIDAY MORNING, THE MULLAHS PUT THE DECREE TO THE TEST. AND BETWEEN A HUNDRED AND A THOUSAND PEOPLE WERE KILLED AS A RESULT.

WESTERN DIPLOMATS THINK FRIDAY'S CARNAGE AND CONTINUED MARTIAL LAW ARE HAVING THEIR DETERRENT EFFECT. WHILE THEY DO NOT RULE OUT POSSIBLE FUTURE GUERRILLA ACTIONS, THEY FEEL DIRECT CONFRONTATIONS LIKE THE ONE AT JALEH SQUARE LAST WEEK WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN. THE INGREDIENTS OF UNREST ARE STILL THERE, HOWEVER. AS THE DIPLOMATS SEE IT, THE SHAH TOOK ON A NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE MISSION WHEN HE PLEDGED THAT THOUSANDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN OIL REVENUE POURING INTO THE COUNTRY WOULD FINANCE PLANS OF TURNING IRAN INTO AN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL STATE PRACTICALLY OVERNIGHT.

IN A COUNTRY WHERE SIXTY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF THIRTY-FIVE MILLION IS STILL ILLITERATE AND WOMEN ARE GENERALLY BARRED FROM THE LABOR FORCE, THE CRASH INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAMS HAVE INEVITABLY GENERATED MORE FRUSTRATIONS THAN BROAD-BASED BENEFITS. THE CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION OF THE MANY WHO BECAME RICH HAS ONLY ROUSED THE ENVY OF THOSE VERY MANY WHO DID NOT. THE RAPID WESTERNIZATION HAS OFFENDED THE ORTHODOX SHI-ITE MOSLEM TRADITIONS OF MOST OF THE PEOPLE. THE GRIEVANCES HAVE BEEN EXPLOITED BY THE MULLAHS, MANY OF WHOM OWE ALLEGIANCE TO THE EXILED SHI'ITE SAGE, AYATOLLAH KHOMEINY. HE LEFT IRAN FOR EXILE IN IRAQ AFTER THE BITTER DISTURBANCES WHICH ROCKED THE COUNTRY IN 1963. AYATOLLAH KHOMEINY HAD SWORN TO BRING ABOUT THE DOWNFALL OF THE PAHLAVI DYNASTY.

IN AN EFFORT TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION, THE SHAH, LAST MONTH, INSTALLED A NEW PRIME MINISTER -- JAAFER SHARIF-EMAMI. THIS WEEK, HIS GOVERNMENT PROMISED TO DEFEND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, GIVE PRIORITY TO AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING, AND TO STAMP OUT CORRUPTION WITH A FIRM HAND. IN A GESTURE TO MOLLIFY RELIGIOUS CRITICS, IT BANNED PORNOGRAPHY, CLOSED GAMBLING CASINOS, AND RE-INTRODUCED THE ANCIENT MOSLEM LUNAR CALENDAR. IT ALSO IS

RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF MARTIAL LAW IN TEHERAN AND ELEVEN OTHER CITIES.

PRIME MINISTER SHARIF-EMANI PROMISES AS OFTEN AS HE CAN, HOWEVER, THAT THE MEASURES ARE ONLY TEMPORARY. IN THE MEANTIME, NEWSPAPERS HAVE HAD TO GO BACK TO THE NON-TOO-SUBTLE KIND OF SELF-CENSORSHIP THAT WENT ON BEFORE THE LATEST DISTURBANCES AND THERE ARE PERSISTENT BUT UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF WIDESPREAD SECURITY AND POLITICAL ARRESTS, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS. ONE WESTERN DIPLOMATIC SOURCE THOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SURVIVE. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE BASIC SUBSTRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETY IS SOLID. IT BACKS THE SHAH AND IT'S INTERESTED IN EVOLUTIONARY, NOT REVOLUTIONARY, CHANGE. HE FEELS THAT THE MILITARY, WHICH THE SHAH OBVIOUSLY DEPENDS, SEES ITS FUTURE AS BOUND UP WITH THAT OF THE MONARCHY. THEY STAND OR FALL TOGETHER WAS THE WAY HE PUT IT. IN THE MEANTIME, SOME PROTEST STRIKES CONTINUE. THERE ARE REPORTS OF MINOR SCATTERED DEMONSTRATIONS AND TROOPS BACKED UP BY ARMOR CAN BE SEEN AT MANY STRATEGIC CROSSROADS IN THE CAPITAL.

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